

Message Text

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12

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 OES-03 AID-05 IO-10 PM-04 NSC-05

SP-02 SS-15 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-01 USIA-06

PRS-01 L-03 EB-07 /092 W

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R 131213Z AUG 75

FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4250

INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

DIA WASHDC

CINCEUR

C O N F I D E N T I A L DAMASCUS 3100

BEIRUT PASS BAGHDAD

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: ECON, PFOR, SY, IZ

SUBJECT: EUPHRATES WATER - SYRIAN/SAUDI AGREEMENT

REF: A. DAMASCUS 3033; B. DAMASCUS 2979

1. SUMMARY: JOINT SYRO/SAUDI STATEMENT AT END OF PRINCE FAHD'S VISIT NOTES SYRIAN "AGREEMENT TO SAG PROPOSAL" ON PROPORTIONAL DISTRIBUTION TO SYRIA AND IRAQ OF WATERS ENTERING SYRIA FROM TURKEY AND CLAIMS SARG/GOI AGREEMENT TO BE SIGNED AT LATER DATE. NO DETAILS YET AVAILABLE BUT SPECULATION HERE IS SARG/SAG AGREEENT IS CLOSE TO ORIGINAL SYRIAN POSITION ON WATER DISTRIBUTION, I.E., TWO-THIRDS FOR IRAQ, ONE-THIRD FOR SYRIA. EUPHRATES DAM MINISTER REMAINS WORRIED OVER WATER LEVEL DROP IN LADE ASAD AND CRITICAL WATER SHORTAGE FACING ALEPPO. END SUMMARY.

2. PORTION OF JOINT SYRIAN/SAUDI STATEMENT AGUUST 12

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FOLLOWING TWO DAY VISIT OF SAUDI PRINCE FAHD DEALING WITH

SYRIAN/IRAQI EUPHRATES WATERS DISPUTE NOTES SARG'S APPRECIATION OF EFFORTS EXERTED BY SAG TO SETTLE DISPUTE. "IN RESPONSE TO INITIATIVE OF KING KHALID AND CROWN PRINCE FAHD, ON IN VIEW OF ARAB CONSIDERATIONS GOVERNING POSITIONS OF SARG AND ITS POLICY IN WHICH NATIONAL CONSIDERATIONS OVERCOME REGIONAL CONSIDERATIONS, SARG AGREED TO SAUDI PROPOSAL TO DISTRIBUTE WATERS ON PROPORTIONAL BASIS AND TO IRAQ'S SHARE OF EUPHRATES WATERS ON BASIS OF SPECIFIC PERCENTAGE OF WATERS CROSSING SYRIAN/TURKISH BORDERS, PLEDGING ITSELF TO CHANNEL THIS PERCENTAGE TO SYRIAN/IRAQI BORDER. AGREEMENT BETWEEN IRAQ AND SYRIA WILL BE SIGNED AT A LATER DATE."

3. "LATER DATE" WAS PHRASE ALSO USED BY SARG EUPHRATES DAM MINISTER KAHALE, AUGUST 12 IN COMMENTING ON ALLEGED IMMINENCE OF SYRO-IRAQI SIGNATURE OF WATER AGREEMENT. KAHALE REITERATED TO EMBOFF HIS CONCERN OVER EFFECT OF FURTHER DROP IN WATER LEVEL OF LAKE ASAD BEHIND DAM. HE SAID DROP TO DATE OF NEARLY THREE METERS DUE TO WATER RELEASED TO IRAQ WAS CAUSING CURRENT ALEPPO WATER SHORTAGE AS CONDUITS FROM LAKE TO ALEPPO HAVE BECOME CLOGGED WITH SEDIMENT. KAHALE SAID THERE ARE ELECTRICALLY POWERED DREDGE-TYPE MACHINES TO REMOVE SEDIMENT, BUT TRANSFORMERS AND OTHER NECESSARY ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT NECESSARY FOR OPERATION NOT YET INSTALLED. KAHALE IS ENDEAVORING TO INSTALL DIESEL POWERED MACHINERY, BUT SAID THIS WOULD TAKE ANOTHER MONTH. KAHALE CONCLUDED "SOMETHING MUST BE DONE" AS NEXT 30 DAYS WILL BE CRITICAL FOR ALEPPO (THUS ECHOING DEP PRIMIN HAYDAR'S EARLIER COMMENT TO AMBASSADOR RE CRITICAL MONTH AHEAD, REF A).

4. DEPUTY PLANNING MINISTER HILOU DID NOT BELIEVE ALEPPO CONDUIT DESIGN WAS AT FAULT, I.E., THAT SOVIET TECHNICAL ADVICE HAD BEEN IN ERROR. HE, KAHALE AND NUMEROUS SYRIAN OFFICIALS AT DAM WE HAVE MET ON PERIODIC VISITS HAVE ALWAYS EMPHASIZED COMPLETE SYRIAN DESIGN CONTROL OF PROJECT AND DENIED ANY UNQUESTIONING ACCEPTANCE OF SOVIET TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.

5. WE HAVE AT THIS POINT ONLY SPECULATION RE CONTENTS
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OF REPORTED AGREEMENT ANNOUNCED IN SARG/SAG STATEMENT. LOCAL SYRIAN AP CORRESPONDENT PREDICTS AGREEMENT WILL REFLECT POSITION CLOSE TO ORIGINAL SYRIAN PROPOSAL OF TWO-THIRDS OF WATER ENTERING SYRIA FROM TURKEY FOR IRAQ AND ONE-THIRD FOR SYRIA.

6. MEANWHILE, LATE EVENING AUGUST 12 DAMASCUS RADIO CONTINUED CAMPAIGN AGAINST IRAQI REGIME, ITS CORRUPTION,

FUNDS DEPOSITED IN SECRET ACCOUNTS IN EUROPEAN BANKS,
ETC.
MURPHY

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NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: AGREEMENTS, INTERNATIONAL RIVERS, WATER DIVERSION, WATER RIGHTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 13 AUG 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: KelleyW0
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975DAMASC03100
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750281-0059
From: DAMASCUS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750854/aaaabuzc.tel
Line Count: 118
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 DAMASCUS 3033, 75 DAMASCUS 2979
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: KelleyW0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 13 JUN 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <13 JUN 2003 by ShawDG>; APPROVED <28 OCT 2003 by KelleyW0>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: EUPHRATES WATER - SYRIAN/SAUDI AGREEMENT
TAGS: ECON, PFOR, SY, IZ
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006